

the great revulsion of 1906 The
 emotional tides that
culminated in 1906 in the return of a vast
 Liberal majority,
and of a Labour Party of over forty members, to
 the House
of Commons, were of a kind to leave them cold
 Although
in the 1920 edition of their *History of Trade*
 Unionism will
be found the best account existing both of the
 rise of the
Labour Party and of the forces and
 circumstances out
of which it arose, they did not anticipate 01
 share in its
emergence Oddly enough, the one
 individual, of those
with whom they were closely concerned about
 this time,
who did smell the coming political change, was
 H G Wells
H G Wells had joined the Fabian Society
 in 1903, by
which time he had already won himself a
 bright reputation
as one of the most thought-provoking social
 novelists of
the day His immense vitality as well as his
 intellectual
"background in science" interested and
 attracted the
Webbs, they took him up, talked about him to
 everybody,
and had the greatest hopes of the new and
 vivid drive that
he could bung into good causes generally
 He was then
an ardent Socialist ardour was
 altogether in his line
By 1906 he was all for expanding and reforming
 the Fabian
Society making it over into something
 quite different
and much more Wellsian His paper on *The*
 Faults of the
Fabian was quite in the best early mutual fun-
 poking trad-
ition, and nobody enjoyed it more at the time
 that the so-
called ^{£C} Junta," of which of course Shaw and
 Webb were

the dominating figures Actually read in
 February 1906,
after the General Election, it had been
 prepared before
it Sketchy and quite unreal in its
 practical proposals
(Had Mr Wells ever been on a Committee
 before?), it
was securely grounded on the assumption that
 Socialism,
at the close of 1905, was in the air, and had
 only got to be
intelligently condensed to become a mighty
 force Why
should the Society not exploit this superb
 opportunity?
Why should it not come out into the open
 cease to be